

null
Diana T Fritz 08/28/2006 04:07:47 PM From DB/Inbox: Search Results

Cable
Text:

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 03391

SIPDIS
CXABU:
ACTION: POL
INFO: DAO LEGAT RSO AMB DCM MEPI P/M ECON USLO

DISSEMINATION: POL
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: AMB:MJSISON
DRAFTED: POL:JFMAYBURY
CLEARED: ECON:ACURTIS

VZCZCADI851
RR RUEHC RUEHZM RUEHDE RHMFISS RHEHNSC
DE RUEHAD #3391/01 2150657
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 030657Z AUG 05
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0968
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHDE/AMCONSUL DUBAI 5288
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 003391

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/FO, NEA/ARPI, S/CT, DS/ITA, DS/IP, NEA,
INR/NESA
NSC FOR JUAN ZARATE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/03/2015
TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [ASEC](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: UAE THINK TANK PAINTS ROSY PICTURE ON TERROR
VULNERABILITY

REF: A. ABU DHABI 3264

[1](#)B. ABU DHABI 3299
[1](#)C. ABU DHABI 3243

Classified By: AMBASSADOR MICHELE J. SISON, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: An editorial by a quasi-governmental Abu Dhabi think tank asserting that the UAE is "an island isolated from terrorism" because of its "alert and advanced" security services appears to be part of an effort to attempt to reassure investors, tourists, and residents that the UAE remains a safe place. Despite measures already being taken to protect against terrorist attacks, the editorial recommends further "preventive measures" to increase the security of critical infrastructure and public places, and enlists the media, academia, Shari'a scholars, and religious officials to play a greater role in promoting moderation and rejecting extremism. The editorial, issued by the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research (ECSSR), comes in the wake of a Bloomberg News story about an Islamist Web site threat message against the UAE (ref A). End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) The ECSSR editorial, published July 29 in the semi-official "Al Ittihad," lists the reasons why the UAE has not been a target of terrorism despite being "in an environment full of attacks and explosions." The reasons include "the alert and advanced" security services in the UAE, "who know exactly their role and perform it fully." The editorial comes on the heels of a July 24, Bloomberg News story of a threat message against the UAE that had been posted on the Islamist Web site "Al Sakifah." After the

Bloomberg News story appeared, a UAEG source publicly dismissed the threat as "baseless statements" and "absurd", and said that the UAE's "preventive measures are there to ensure security and stability."

13. (C) The ECSSR also attributes the UAE's safety and stability to the lack of "internal or sectarian tensions," which are factors behind terrorism in many countries. The internal dissension that generates violence, extremism, and terrorism in some countries is non-existent in the UAE, according to the editorial. The editorial refutes speculation that the UAE faces the danger of terrorism due to its large expatriate population. (Note: Eighty-five percent of the UAE's 4.2 million residents are expatriates, including 1.3 million Indians, 450,000 Pakistanis, 150,000 Afghans, and sizable populations of Egyptians, Palestinians, Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans, Filipinos, and Iranians. Emirati officials have told us in the past that they view the large number of expatriates as a potential security risk. End note.) The editorial contrasts the quiet political and social discourse in the UAE with the discourse in some countries "faced with waves of violence and terrorism."

14. (U) The ECSSR editorial also notes that the religious discourse in the UAE "adopts a clear and moderate message, which concentrates on condemning terrorism and promoting security, and calls for moderation, tolerance, and mercy, the keynotes of Islam and a method for Muslims. ... The message also rejects all forms of extremism in logic and conviction." The ECSSR's statements mirror recent Friday sermons crafted by the Ministry of Justice and Islamic Affairs condemning terrorist violence and warning those responsible for terror attacks that their actions will have dire consequences (ref B). The editorial also credits the UAE's safety to its charitable organizations and their "transparent humanitarian message" at home and abroad.

15. (C) The editorial recommends that the UAE take "preventive measures" to protect against terrorism, including monitoring "abnormal behavior" by visitors or transit passengers traveling to countries "witnessing continuous terrorist actions." The report also called for greater security awareness by officials responsible for the security of utilities, restaurants, hotels, and public places. As we noted in ref C, many of these measures are being implemented, but the UAE's homeland security strategy lacks a coherent approach, and relies more on acquisition of state-of-the-art technology aimed primarily at detecting suspicious individuals and activities.

16. (U) The editorial calls on the local media to "focus on rejection of violence and prejudice, and to show the nature of the country's interaction with the outside world, its positive collaboration with the just Arab and Islamic causes." The ECSSR said it is important to "repeat actions that reveal to the general public the opinion of Shari'a scholars and leaders who reject violence and extremism, and who reveal the negative impacts and serious consequences of violence and terrorism on individuals and societies. There is a necessity to raise the level of religious discourse that is directed toward cleaning thoughts and ideologies from extremism. It is also important for the media, discussion programs, and opinion leaders in this society to open extremism and terrorism files more courageously, and to handle such an issue mentally, religiously, socially, and culturally."

17. (C) Comment: UAE officials have told us they are aware of their security vulnerabilities and have implemented select measures to try to protect their critical infrastructure and borders. However, the quasi-governmental ECSSR appears to lack a clear understanding of the depth of the UAE's vulnerability. The ECSSR was, until two years ago, a government think tank under the direct supervision of Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (MbZ). While MbZ, who is now Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and President Khalifa's national security adviser, remains its chairman of the board, the organization has recently attempted to present itself as an

independent think tank. End comment.
SISON